



General Assembly

January Session, 2015

Raised Bill No. 1058

LCO No. 4737



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 45a-8c of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

3 (a) The Probate Court Administrator may, within available
4 appropriations, establish a [pilot] truancy clinic within [the] any
5 Regional Children's Probate [Courts for Waterbury and New Haven]
6 court that serves a town designated as an alliance district, pursuant to
7 section 10-262u. The administrative judge of each Regional Children's
8 Probate Court, or the administrative judge's designee, shall administer
9 the truancy clinic for the administrative judge's respective court.

10 (b) [The] If the Probate Court Administrator establishes truancy
11 clinics pursuant to subsection (a) o this section, the principal of any
12 elementary or middle school located in [the Waterbury or New Haven
13 school district, as the case may be] a town designated as an alliance
14 district, or the principal's designee, may refer to [the] a truancy clinic a
15 parent or guardian with a child enrolled in such school who is a truant,

16 as defined in section 10-198a, as amended by this act, or at risk of
17 becoming a truant. Upon receiving such referral, the truancy clinic
18 shall prepare a citation and summons for the parent or guardian of the
19 child to appear at the clinic. An attendance officer authorized pursuant
20 to section 10-199, or a police officer authorized pursuant to section 10-
21 200, shall deliver the citation and summons and a copy of the referral
22 to the parent or guardian.

23 (c) The administrative judge of the Regional Children's Probate
24 Court [for Waterbury or New Haven] that serves a town designated as
25 an alliance district may refer any matter referred to [the] a truancy
26 clinic to a probate magistrate or attorney probate referee assigned by
27 the Probate Court Administrator pursuant to section 45a-123a to hear
28 the matter.

29 (d) The truancy clinics shall operate for the purpose of identifying
30 and resolving the cause of a child's truancy using nonpunitive
31 procedures. After the initial appearance made pursuant to the
32 summons described in subsection (b) of this section, the participation
33 of a parent or guardian in the truancy clinic shall be voluntary. The
34 truancy clinics shall establish protocols for clinic participation and
35 shall establish programs and relationships with schools, individuals,
36 public and private agencies, and other organizations to provide
37 services and support for parents, guardians and children participating
38 in the clinics.

39 (e) The Probate Court Administrator shall establish policies and
40 procedures to implement the truancy clinics and measure the
41 effectiveness of the truancy clinics.

42 (f) Not later than September 1, [2014] 2015, and annually thereafter,
43 the administrative judge of [the] a Regional Children's Probate Court
44 [for Waterbury and the administrative judge of the Regional Children's
45 Probate Court for New Haven] that serves a town designated as an
46 alliance district in which a truancy clinic has been established shall

47 [each] file a report with the Probate Court Administrator assessing the
48 effectiveness of [the] each truancy clinic in the administrative judge's
49 respective court.

50 (g) Not later than January 1, 2016, the Probate Court Administrator
51 shall submit, in accordance with section 11-4a, a report assessing the
52 effectiveness of the truancy clinics to the joint standing committees of
53 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the
54 judiciary and education.

55 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) (a) As used in this section,
56 section 3 of this act and sections 10-198b and 10-220 of the general
57 statutes, as amended by this act:

58 (1) "Chronically absent child" means a child who is enrolled in a
59 school under the jurisdiction of a local or regional board of education
60 and whose total number of absences at any time during a school year
61 is equal to or greater than ten per cent of the total number of days that
62 such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year;

63 (2) "Absence" means an excused absence, unexcused absence or
64 disciplinary absence, as defined by the State Board of Education
65 pursuant to section 10-198b of the general statutes, as amended by this
66 act, and an in-school suspension, as defined in section 10-233a of the
67 general statutes, that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school
68 day;

69 (3) "District chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of
70 chronically absent children under the jurisdiction of a local or regional
71 board of education in the previous school year divided by the total
72 number of children under the jurisdiction of such board for such
73 school year; and

74 (4) "School chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of
75 chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year
76 divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for

77 such school year.

78 (b) Each local and regional board of education that has a district
79 chronic absenteeism rate of ten per cent or higher, or has a school
80 under the jurisdiction of the board with a school chronic absenteeism
81 rate of fifteen per cent or higher, shall establish a district school
82 attendance review team to address chronic absenteeism at the school.
83 The district school attendance review team may consist of school
84 administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers
85 and representatives from community-based programs who address
86 issues related to student attendance by providing programs and
87 services to truants, as defined in section 10-198a of the general statutes,
88 as amended by this act, and chronically absent children and their
89 parents or guardians. The district school attendance review team shall
90 be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically
91 absent children, discussing school interventions and community
92 referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making
93 any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically
94 absent children and their parents or guardians. The school attendance
95 review team shall meet at least monthly.

96 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) (a) Not later than January 1,
97 2016, the Department of Education, in consultation with the
98 Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap established
99 pursuant to section 10-16nn of the general statutes, shall develop a
100 chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan for use by local
101 and regional boards of education to reduce chronic absenteeism in the
102 school district.

103 (b) (1) The chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan
104 shall include, but need not be limited to, the following: (A) Information
105 that describes (i) chronic absenteeism, including, but not limited to, the
106 definition of a chronically absent child under section 2 of this act, and
107 the causes of chronic absenteeism, such as poverty, violence, poor
108 health and lack of access to transportation, (ii) the effect of chronic

109 absenteeism on a student's academic performance, and (iii) how family
110 and school partnerships with community resources, including, but not
111 limited to, family resource centers and youth service bureaus, can
112 reduce chronic absenteeism and improve student attendance, and (B) a
113 means of collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance,
114 truancy and chronic absenteeism for the purpose of (i) disaggregating
115 such data by school district, school, grade and subgroups, such as race,
116 ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free or reduced priced lunches and
117 students whose primary language is not English, and (ii) assisting local
118 and regional boards of education in (I) tracking chronic absenteeism
119 over multiple years and for the current school year, (II) developing
120 indicators to identify students who are at risk of being chronically
121 absent children, (III) monitoring student's attendance over time, and
122 (IV) making adjustments to interventions as they are being
123 implemented.

124 (2) The chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan may
125 include, but need not be limited to, the following: (A) A research-based
126 and data-driven mentorship model that addresses and attempts to
127 reduce chronic absenteeism through the use of mentors, such as
128 students, teachers, administrators, intramural and interscholastic
129 athletic coaches, school resource officers and community partners, and
130 (B) incentives and rewards that recognize schools and students that
131 improve attendance and reduce the school chronic absenteeism rate.

132 Sec. 4. Subsection (c) of section 10-220 of the general statutes is
133 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
134 *1, 2015*):

135 (c) Annually, each local and regional board of education shall
136 submit to the Commissioner of Education a strategic school profile
137 report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district
138 as a whole. The superintendent of each local and regional school
139 district shall present the profile report at the next regularly scheduled
140 public meeting of the board of education after each November first.

141 The profile report shall provide information on measures of (1) student
142 needs, (2) school resources, including technological resources and
143 utilization of such resources and infrastructure, (3) student and school
144 performance, including [truancy] the number of truants, as defined in
145 section 10-198a, as amended by this act, and chronically absent
146 children, as defined in section 2 of this act, (4) the number of students
147 enrolled in an adult high school credit diploma program, pursuant to
148 section 10-69, operated by a local or regional board of education or a
149 regional educational service center, (5) equitable allocation of resources
150 among its schools, (6) reduction of racial, ethnic and economic
151 isolation, and (7) special education. For purposes of this subsection,
152 measures of special education include (A) special education
153 identification rates by disability, (B) rates at which special education
154 students are exempted from mastery testing pursuant to section 10-
155 14q, (C) expenditures for special education, including such
156 expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures, (D) achievement
157 data for special education students, (E) rates at which students
158 identified as requiring special education are no longer identified as
159 requiring special education, (F) the availability of supplemental
160 educational services for students lacking basic educational skills, (G)
161 the amount of special education student instructional time with
162 nondisabled peers, (H) the number of students placed out-of-district,
163 and (I) the actions taken by the school district to improve special
164 education programs, as indicated by analyses of the local data
165 provided in subparagraphs (A) to (H), inclusive, of this subdivision.
166 The superintendent shall include in the narrative portion of the report
167 information about parental involvement and if the district has taken
168 measures to improve parental involvement, including, but not limited
169 to, employment of methods to engage parents in the planning and
170 improvement of school programs and methods to increase support to
171 parents working at home with their children on learning activities. For
172 purposes of this subsection, measures of truancy include the type of
173 data that is required to be collected by the Department of Education
174 regarding attendance and unexcused absences in order for the

175 department to comply with federal reporting requirements and the
 176 actions taken by the local or regional board of education to reduce
 177 truancy in the school district. Such truancy data shall be considered a
 178 public record for purposes of chapter 14.

179 Sec. 5. Section 10-198b of the general statutes is repealed and the
 180 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

181 On or before July 1, 2012, the State Board of Education shall define
 182 "excused absence" and "unexcused absence", and on or before January
 183 1, 2016, the State Board of Education shall define "disciplinary absence"
 184 for use by local and regional boards of education for the [purpose]
 185 purposes of carrying out the provisions of section 10-198a, as amended
 186 by this act, [and for the purpose of] reporting truancy, pursuant to
 187 subsection (c) of section 10-220, as amended by this act, and calculating
 188 the district chronic absenteeism rate and the school chronic
 189 absenteeism rate pursuant to section 2 of this act.

190 Sec. 6. Subsection (a) of section 10-198a of the general statutes is
 191 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
 192 *1, 2015*):

193 (a) For purposes of this section, section 10-220, as amended by this
 194 act, and section 2 of this act, "truant" means a child age five to eighteen,
 195 inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and has four
 196 unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused
 197 absences from school in any school year.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2015</i>	45a-8c
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2015</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2015</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2015</i>	10-220(c)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2015</i>	10-198b
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2015</i>	10-198a(a)

Statement of Purpose:

To expand the Probate Court Truancy Clinic program to include alliance districts, to require school districts that have high rates of chronic absenteeism to establish a district school attendance review team, to require the Department of Education to develop a chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan, to require the State Board of Education to define "disciplinary absence" and to require boards of education to report data relating to student attendance.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]